



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

For Immediate Release April 10, 2013

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MILWAUKEE AREA COMMUNITY LEADERS, STATE LEGISLATORS, COUNTY SUPERVISORS SPEAK OUT AGAINST AB 85, WHICH WOULD LIMIT EFFECTIVE BOARD GOVERNANCE

(MADISON, WI) – Milwaukee area community leaders, state legislators and County Supervisors expressed their strong opposition to AB 85, which would strip the Milwaukee County Board of its ability to govern effectively, prior to a public hearing on the bill in Madison on Wednesday.

Rev. Willie Brisco, president of Milwaukee Inner City Churches Allied for Hope (MICA) and a representative of several community groups opposing the bill, including the Milwaukee chapter of the NAACP, said the bill would adversely affect local control and minority representation on the Board.

"The Milwaukee community is diverse and complicated, and we believe we should control our local government, not the state," Brisco said. "It is clear from the transfer of powers in this legislation that the state does not understand and has not been paying attention to Milwaukee County residents. Because if they had, they would know that the County Board of Supervisors, who are the representatives of the people, are not the problem in Milwaukee County. The Board represents the most diverse county and is the most diverse board in the state. The push to take away their oversight and eliminate transparency in county government only proves that the proponents of this legislation want to limit the voice of the people and rid themselves of legislative democracy."

Rep. Sandy Pasch, D-Shorewood, said the bill was a distraction from serious issues facing the county.

"At a time when Wisconsin ranks 44th in the nation and trails all our neighboring states in job creation, we should be focused on bold and immediate action to provide stability for our everyday families – not distracting proposals that divide and disregard our local communities," said Rep. Pasch. "Unfortunately, AB 85's attack on local control has done more to polarize Milwaukee County than reform it, so I hope that legislators pushing this proposal will allow local leaders to discuss how Milwaukee County government can best serve its residents instead of assuming Madison politicians know what's best for Milwaukee's communities."

Martin Farrell, Chairman of the Fond du Lac County Board, said that the bill was an attack on local government.

"Today is a sad day as we see a new attempt to dismantle local government," said Farrell. "First they took away our funding; now they are working to take away power from the local representatives who are closest to the people. What will be next, our public buildings to conglomerate? Local officials statewide should be concerned as the most aggressive take-over of local government is on the move."

Sen. Timothy Carpenter, D-Milwaukee, said, "AB 85 pretends to be one thing, but is really another."

"The issues in this bill are not before the public in the binding referendum, and it's like going to the dentist for a teeth cleaning and getting a root canal. Milwaukee County residents deserve better," he said.

(more)

Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic said the bill was an attack on local control that removes the checks and balances from the legislative process.

“This piece of legislation is anti-local control and anti-transparency,” said Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic. “It places too much power with the County Executive’s office while virtually stripping the Board of its ability to govern effectively. Transparency will go by the wayside because the board will be limited in its ability to review County operations.

"Today we go to the State Assembly and ask them not to eliminate what the statutes created, local control. This legislation, which attempts to bypass local control and ensure there is nothing left of the legislative branch of government, is a slap in the face to the people of Milwaukee County who demand transparency in government and want their voices to be heard.”

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